

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAS. 4. & 5.)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, IT

SUBJECT: MINISTER LA MALFA REGRETS AMERICAN ABSENCE FROM EUROPEAN
LABOR SCENE

1. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON FEBRUARY 4, MINISTER OF THE TREASURY UGO LA MALFA (PRI) EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TRADE UNION FIELD. HE WAS PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS FOR AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO STEM THE TIDE OF WHAT HE FELT TO BE A STEADY ADVANCE OF THE COMMUNIST CAUSE. LA MALFA STATED THAT SINCE THE AFL-CIO "PULLED OUT OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS," THE COMMUNISTS HAVE EFFECTIVELY FILLED THE VOID. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH ITALY AND EUROPE ARE VERY SERIOUS, HE SAID, ALLUDING TO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT THE EAST-WEST TRADE UNION CONFERENCE AT GENEVA AND THE ETUC SESSION IN BRUSSELS.

2. BRUNO STORTI, CISL GENERAL SECRETARY, ABOUT WHOM LA MALFA EVIDENTLY HAS A LOW OPINION, IS, ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER, CO-
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OPERATING CLOSELY WITH CGIL SECRETARY GENERAL LAMA. IF LABOR UNI-

FICATION WERE TO BE ACHIEVED IN ITALY, LA MALFA SAID SERIOUS TROUBLE FOR THE COUNTRY WOULD ENSUE. HE FELT THAT THE UIL, AND PARTICULARLY ITS GENERAL SECRETARY VANNI, WERE MUCH LESS INTERESTED IN LABOR UNITY, AND HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT VANNI COULD BE BROUGHT TO COMBINE WITH VITO SCALIA, MAVERICK CISL OFFICIAL, IN ORDER TO THWART THE UNIFICATION MOVEMENT.

3. MINISTER LA MALFA RETURNED REPEATEDLY TO THE THEME THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD IN SOME WAY ASSIST IN EFFORTS TO FRUSTRATE COMMUNIST PLANS, THAT "AN AMERICAN PRESENCE IN ITALY" WAS NEEDED TO ALERT FREE LABOR FORCES TO THE DANGERS TOWARD WHICH THEY WERE HEADING ON THE ROAD TO UNITY WITH THE COMMUNISTS.

4. COMMENT. THE MAIN EMPHASIS OF THE MINISTER'S REMARKS, NAMELY, THE VITAL NEED FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF AMERICAN LABOR IN EUROPEAN TRADE UNION AFFAIRS IN ORDER TO PREVENT AN ABDICATION TO THE COMMUNISTS OF FREE LABOR ORGANIZATIONS IN ITALY AND ELSEWHERE, IS HEARD INCREASINGLY FROM VARIOUS QUARTERS. IN PART, THIS SMACKS OF A PLEA FOR AMERICAN LABOR TO SAVE THE EUROPEAN UNIONS FROM THEMSELVES. IN A LARGER SENSE, HOWEVER, THE IMPLICATIONS OF COMMUNISTS ADVANCES IN THE RANKS OF EUROPEAN LABOR REPRESENT A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM OF EUROPE, AND THUS TO THE GREAT US INTERESTS ON THIS CONTINENT. US LABOR OUGHT NOT SIMPLY STAND ASIDE AND DRAW SATISFACTION FROM THE FULFILLMENT OF THEIR PREDICTIONS ON THE RESULTS OF TRAFFICKING WITH COMMUNIST LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. PRESUMABLY, THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE AFL-CIO'S IRVING BROWN TO PARIS REPRESENTS THE BEGINNING OF A REINTRODUCTION OF AMERICAN LABOR INFLUENCE IN EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS.

5. THE MINISTER'S HOPES FOR COMBINING VANNI AND SCALIA IN OPPOSING UNITY WOULD APPEAR UNLIKELY OF ACHIEVEMENT ON AT LEAST TWO COUNTS: SCALIA'S FORTUNES ARE IN DECLINE SINCE THE LAST CISL CONVENTION, AND VANNI'S HOLD ON UIL LEADERSHIP IS SO TENUOUS THAT HE HAS OPENLY STATED HE IS NO LONGER WILLING TO BE OUT IN FRONT IN RESISTING LABOR UNITY: HE FEELS IT IS THE CISL'S TURN. WE WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE OUR SEARCH FOR SOMEONE WHO MIGHT REPRESENT THE FORCES OPPOSED TO UNITY. VOLPE

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